

STAT

**Page Denied**

STAT

TASKS OF GDR PRESS AND RADIO OUTLINED

Neues Deutschland  
Berlin, 29 Sep 1953

[The following information is extracted from a report presented by Fred Oelssner, member of the Politburo of the ZK (Central Committee) of the SED (Socialist Unity Party), on the occasion of the 16th meeting of the ZK of the SED held on 17-19 September 1953.]

The press and radio are the most important and most effective means of influencing the masses and of conducting the ideological struggle against hostile concepts and reactionary opinions. These media are also indispensable aids for party training.

The press is known to be the strongest and sharpest weapon of the party. The fact that this weapon has not always been correctly handled was established at the last meeting of the ZK, when the work of the press was severely criticized. At the 15th meeting of the ZK, it was stated that the masses had very little opportunity to express themselves in the newspapers and radio broadcasts, that defects were frequently glossed over, and that letters and requests of the workers were disregarded.

Without doubt, the party press has already started to benefit from this criticism. The newspapers are now chiefly concerned with strengthening their ties with the masses. For example, the Ostsee-Zeitung in Rostock, the Freie Erde in Neustrelitz, and other Bezirk newspapers published editorials in which the criticism of the ZK as well as critical comments of readers were set forth. A large number of editorial staffs held discussions with workers, especially with their people's correspondents /volunteer correspondents from the workers' ranks/, and readers, and thus received important suggestions for the improvement of their work. In this connection, the people's correspondent movement is receiving new impetus, and the number of letters from readers has also risen.

However, Neues Deutschland, the official organ of the ZK, still tends to underestimate the importance of people's correspondents. During August 1953, Neues Deutschland published very few contributions by people's correspondents. Since Neues Deutschland has more space at its disposal than other newspapers, it should publish each day several items furnished by people's correspondents. It must be emphasized that as the official organ of the ZK, Neues Deutschland has not done justice to the role it must assume in setting an example for other newspapers to follow.

It is the task of the newspapers to publicize the national struggle for the conclusion of a peace treaty and for the reunification of Germany. Although the newspapers have devoted some space to these problems, there is still room for improvement.

Both the party press and the radio are extremely negligent in educating the populace, particularly the youth, to develop a genuine spirit of patriotism. It is true that problems of German history have recently received frequent press coverage, but no uniform plan has been established.

The press and radio devote very little attention to the development of a genuine hatred toward the Anglo-American imperialists, who dispute the right of

STAT

our nation to exist. The newspapers too seldom expose the imperialist ideology and the disintegrating Western culture. Both the press and the radio are far too weak in enlightening the masses as to the predatory aims of the US imperialists. The press and radio have done practically nothing to destroy the myth of US strength; thus, the fact that there has been no historical proof of the fighting ability of the imperialist US troops has not been utilized at all in order to destroy the myth of US strength.

The chief defect in the work of the press and radio is at present to be found in the inadequate description of life in the GDR and in the insufficient treatment of the accomplishments of the new course. About 50 percent of the material covered by press and radio should deal with subjects showing how the new course is being accomplished.

Propagandizing the Marxist-Leninist theories constitutes an important task for the party press. It is necessary not only to increase the quantity of these propagandistic articles but also to improve their quality and effectiveness. The articles propagandizing Marxism-Leninism, which have been appearing much too infrequently of late, are usually completely detached from the practical tasks of the party.

Another important part of the propaganda work is the treatment of the USSR. It is not enough to publish accounts of the tremendous material aid rendered by the USSR for the accomplishment of the new course in the GDR. Constant emphasis should be placed on the fact that our friendship with the USSR has deep class roots, that the cause of the Soviet people is the cause of the working classes in all countries, that the USSR was the first to embody the great ideas of Marx and Lenin, and that the USSR is the first workers' and peasants' state in the world.

However, in meeting its responsibilities with respect to the above tasks, the press must never neglect its basic task, that of convincing the masses to support actively the policies of our party. The departments for party activities on most editorial staffs, particularly the Neues Deutschland, play a very minor role and sometimes do not function at all. The newspapers must educate the party members and candidates, and must use concrete facts to point out to the masses the leading role of the SED. The newspapers have been very negligent in reporting on the activities of local party organizations, the activities of the propagandists, the functions of the party aktiv, and many other aspects of the party's work.

Constant guidance of editorial staffs by appropriate party managements is of exceptional importance for the improvement of the press work. The SED Bezirk managements still continue to underestimate the significance of the press as the most important means of (1) improving the over-all ideological-political work among the masses, (2) strengthening the leading role of the party in the political, economic, and cultural life in the GDR, and (3) mobilizing the masses. As a result, the Bezirk managements give only sporadic guidance and support to the editorial staffs. The following measures must be taken in the future to improve this situation:

1. The editorial staff is to prepare its own plan on the basis of the work plans of the Bezirk management and the central press. This plan is to be approved by the Bezirk Secretariat. An instructor for press problems is to be assigned to the Bezirk management to supervise the execution of the plan. The same procedure will apply to the Kreis management, which will approve the plan of the Kreis editorial staff and will exercise supervision through the agitation-propaganda department.

STAT

2. At plenums to be held periodically, the Bezirk or Kreis management will hear the reports of the editorial staff. A member of the Bezirk or Kreis management will present the plan of that organization. A resolution will then be adopted as to the work of the editorial staff.

3. The Secretariat of the Bezirk or Kreis management will confer regularly with the editorial staff on current problems, review the work of the editorial staff, and make concrete suggestions.

4. At periodic intervals, the Secretariat of the Bezirk or Kreis management will deal with the circulation of the newspaper, and will determine the areas and localities where subscription campaigns must be carried out.

Radio programs were also criticized at the 15th meeting of the ZK. In general, the defects and weaknesses in this field are similar to those enumerated above for the press. There have been considerable improvements in radio programs since the 15th meeting of the ZK. Increased attention is being devoted to the interests of the workers, particularly in the radio programs for farmers and for West Germany. There has also been an increase in the use of reports of radio correspondents [volunteer contributors from the workers' ranks] on broadcasts. However, the monthly records of the Department for Radio Correspondents show that editorial staffs are still underestimating the importance of the radio correspondents' reports. Radio must give the workers more opportunities to make their own contributions to the programs.

Like the press, radio programs have been negligent in popularizing the successes in the GDR and in describing everyday life in the GDR. The tendency toward inaccuracy and rosy optimism in reporting is a major fault in radio broadcasts, as well as the press.

One must guard against the false tendency of concentrating only on entertainment in radio programs. Propaganda needs much more emphasis. An important task of radio is to confront the enemy with effective counterarguments, and to present convincing answers to each new lie of the enemy immediately. Radio must develop particular skill in agitating decisively against US imperialism.

- E N D -

STAT